

### **ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

Disclosed is an apparatus for producing a pressurized stream of substantially inert gas.

The apparatus includes a compressor having an intake manifold and an output manifold.

- 5 The intake manifold receives a substantially inert gas stream and the output manifold receives a stream of pressurized gas from the compressor. The apparatus further includes a compressed gas re-circulation conduit connecting the output manifold to the intake manifold such that a portion of the pressurized gas from the compressor is re-
- 10 circulated from the output manifold back to the intake manifold to maintain the gas pressure within the intake manifold above atmospheric pressure and to prevent atmospheric gases from being drawn into the intake manifold.